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Organizational Culture under Religious Influence

Barbara Mazur

Abstract

Based on a review of articles and other published research work as well as the results of the author's research conducted in organizations operating in religiously diverse environments in Poland, this chapter examines the influence of religion on organizational culture. The most important findings of this work concern the vital role religion plays in an organization and its culture. This paper examines religion's influence on organizational culture, which is considered as an independent variable. It proposes a model of organizational culture enriched by the channel by which religion enters the organization's set of values and norms. The chapter consists of the following parts: the analysis of the role of religion in an organization in the light of hitherto research, cultural dimensions of religion, analytical approaches to organizational culture, the integrated model of organizational culture enhanced by the aspect of religion, and the research results confirming the influence of Catholic and Orthodox religions on organizational culture.

Keywords: Catholic and Orthodox religion, dimensions of national culture, basic assumptions, organizational culture

1. Introduction

Organizational culture is an important element in the functioning of an enterprise, which is why it is worth considering the problem of its formation and especially its conditions. Organizational culture is influenced by many factors, ranging from the type of organization, through its characteristics and the characteristics of its participants, to the type of environment it operates in. Researchers of organizational culture determinants attach great importance to the national aspect, indicating that the manifestations of national culture appear both in the category related to the environment and in the characteristics of participants, which proves the role of national culture in shaping organizational culture [1]. External research determinants of organizational culture have been clearly less important in religion. Its impact on organizational culture was not as often analyzed by management theorists as the impact of national culture. However, it must be acknowledged that religion is a source of values and norms and in this sense has a culture-forming nature, becoming one of the pillars of organizational culture [1]. The issue of the impact of religion on organizations and their cultures is becoming increasingly important in the context of globalization and economic integration.

2. The role of religion in an organization

National culture and religion are interrelated because the shape of national culture is influenced by adopted and professed religion. According to Hofstede [2], the type and version of the religion adopted in a given country is the result of previously existing cultural patterns in a given area and a culture-forming factor. He writes that religion adopted in a given country strengthens existing cultural models, making them basic elements of its doctrine [2].

The religious factor is not only a determinant of cultural norms, values, and rules of individual and community conduct, but also has significant formative influence in the field of business. The issues of the cultural dimension of religion and its impact on the problem of work were raised by researchers such as Max Weber and Peter Berger, whose works belong to the most important traditions in social sciences. They pointed to important relations between religion, work, and economy.

Sources of values in organizational culture are therefore cultural qualities existing in the environment of organizations. Those include the region's culture, national culture, religious culture, and personal characteristics of the members of the organization, which—to a large extent—are shaped by the cultural environment of the individual [3]. Religion, being a part of the cultural environment of the organization, affects organizational culture in particular through two of the four factors determining it: the personal characteristics of the organization's participants and the type of environment in which the organization operates [4]. Under homogeneous conditions, they remain similar, while under heterogeneity conditions, they may differ. Religious norms in business act as archetypes: they are passed on in the circles of followers of individual religions from generation to generation and as a result penetrate the collective consciousness, becoming its hidden element conditioning the shape of economic life. As a result, religion plays an important role in the workplace.

The impact of religion on the work process cannot be overestimated because work and religion and their relationships are fundamental components, building blocks of human society [5]. Research to date, although largely fragmentary, has confirmed the existence of a relationship between religion and attitudes toward work. It has also shown the religion's connection to motivation, job satisfaction, and even the degree of commitment to work. In social life, the role of religion is that it equips its followers with a system of values to which they should live. This system, however, also applies to the work environment. Many business practitioners accept the assertion of the need to understand the role of religion as imperative, being convinced that it strongly influences organizational life [6]. Research also shows that employees often turn to God when forced to make difficult decisions. The role of religion is appreciated not only by practitioners but also by management theorists, who, like Trompenaars and Woolliams [7], recognize it as the second most important, after nationality, variable in the cultural dimension of individualism. Since referring only to nationality turns out to be insufficient to explain all the differences between employees in an international organization, it is worth reaching for the denominational cultural values of employees.

3. The cultural dimension of religion

The issue of the cultural dimension of religion indicates the internal dichotomy of religion, which on the one hand includes beliefs and related behaviors regarding what is supernatural and oriented to eternal salvation, on the other—constitutes

a specific type of culture. To emphasize the culture-forming role of religion, Geertz [8] uses the term cultural dimension of religion-culture being understood as embodied in symbols, as a pattern of meanings passed down from generation to generation, a system of inherited images expressed in symbolic forms through which people convey, consolidate, and develop their knowledge of life and attitude toward it. The role of religion in the social and economic life of human communities is not undermined, and among the representatives of the world of science, religion is widely recognized as an important social institution.

Throughout the literature in the field of management, the concept of spirituality is often combined with religion. This position is represented by Benner [9], for whom spirituality means the process of establishing and maintaining a relationship with God. And although not all scholars consider separating spirituality from religiosity, they consider the difference between spirituality and religiosity as largely artificial. They often understand spirituality as values recognized by people and meanings that sometimes embody religious beliefs.

Spirituality, like religion, carries strict cultural connotations. Mitroff and Denton [10] argue that spirituality is a vital human need that should be recognized as fundamental to human experience and should, therefore, be a part of organizational culture. These researchers proposed a new paradigm in the study of organizations. It incorporates concepts such as supernatural forces, showing businesses the path to spirituality-based organizations.

4. Levels of cultural programming

Culture, as Hofstede defines it, is a collective mind programming that distinguishes members of one group from another. People were equipped with “mental programs,” which in early childhood are developed in the family circle and then strengthened during education and work. Three levels of programming can be distinguished: universal (objective), cultural (intersubjective), and individual (subjective) [11].

Listed as the first, the universal level covers the biological functions of the human body, but also expressive behaviors such as laughter and crying, as well as associative and expressive behaviors existing in higher mammals.

Mental programming on a cultural, intersubjective level is almost entirely learned. This level is analogous for all those who, although they are not carriers of the same genes, are subjected to the same socialization process and identify with the same culture. The individual programming level is characteristic for each person, which means that there are no two identically programmed people. This level includes individual personality, although subjective to some extent, it is partly genetically determined.

Everyone's mental programming process is in part unique, in part the same as in other people [12]. Nevertheless, it can be said that people within a given culture think, feel, and react in a certain way which is why they gain in a sense a collective personality.

5. Organizational culture research approaches

The issues of organizational culture are widely recognized as extremely important in the context of organizational management. From many existing definitions of organizational culture, one should be chosen that combines and integrates various cultural concepts. The perception of organizational culture should be divided

into three perspectives: an independent (external) variable, a dependent (internal) variable, and a core metaphor.

Recognizing culture as an independent variable is important for studying the relationship between culture and elements of the management process. In this approach, culture is an explanatory factor or a broad frame of reference that affects specific elements of the management process. Culture from the outside influences the employee and the managerial behavior in a given country and directly determines it. From this perspective, one can compare management and employee attitudes in different countries. The cultural values of a given country influence what is happening in organizations operating in its area. In comparative studies on management methods, the culture of a given country is considered the basic tool of analysis. It answers the question concerning the reasons for behavior in the workplace. This approach included research on national management styles and comparative research on the impact of cultural context on organizations. Culture is understood in functionalist categories and serves as a context affecting the management process. Organizational culture is interpreted as a product of the impact of a given country's culture [4].

Organizational culture is also treated as an element of the organization which depends on the existence of other organizational elements, for example, ownership and transaction costs, activities of the entrepreneur or organizational leaders. This is a dependent variable. In this approach, one can speak of organizational culture management. In this context, leadership is attributed to management. Culture as an internal variable is part of the overarching whole. It is perceived from the point of view of the function it performs for the organization and the way this function is performed.

Employers use a cultural form of regulating behavior as it is cheaper than a bureaucratic or market form. An investment is made in intensive employee training, during which they undergo specific educational, indoctrinating procedures that shape their new values, behavior norms, and daily habits. According to critics of this approach, the importance of the impact of a given country's culture on the functioning of an organization is being diminished. Besides, organizational culture is a "black box" in which it is not known exactly what is going on, but only what is affecting it from the outside. The significance of work and formal organizations for individuals can only be inferred from the description of behavior and indicators obtained from surveys [13].

Organizational culture can also be understood as a native metaphor. It is perceived as an indeterministic model of analysis in which culture is treated as an autonomous entity, not determined by the culture occurring in the environment of a given country, or by other factors of the internal environment of the organization. Culture is treated as a form of expression or manifestation of human consciousness. Research in this approach focuses on the exploration of the phenomenon of an organization as a matter of subjective experience and analyzes patterns that make "organized activities possible." These patterns include rules of action inscribed in the basic assumptions, language, knowledge, and symbols such as myths, ideologies, rituals, and organizational stories. In this perspective, qualitative methods are usually used in research – field research and case studies [14].

Organizations are shaped in the course of everyday interactions. They objectify themselves through joint actions of individuals. The following interactive processes occurring in the organization can be observed: struggle, games, manipulations or negotiations. They give the final character to the company, assuming that they constantly change it. The organization has a processual character. The "black box"

of organizational culture is opened and subjected to description and analysis. This is an approach that departs from functionalism but allows understanding of what is happening in the organization. It explains phenomena such as conflicts, threats, and resistance to change. Critics of this concept accuse it of “being focused mainly on the description of organizational culture, and not on explaining it; on concepts specific to given cultures, and not on universal concepts. Therefore, it is difficult to use general statements explaining the reasons for the occurrence of certain phenomena in the organization” [14].

By considering organizational culture with three different perspectives at the same time, one can get an integrated analysis model, which is a synergistic effect of these interpretations. “Such a definition of the organizational culture, which includes values and norms, systems shared in a given organization, and derived from its environment, colloquial and often unconscious assumptions and related to them, produced by members of the organization, rules of operation, go beyond the limitations of the model treating organizational culture as an independent variable and as a dependent variable, as well as beyond the indeterministic model of analyzing this phenomenon” [4].

The combination of three epistemological perspectives allows a better understanding of the complex phenomenon of organizational culture. In the integrated model, organizational culture is determined by the national culture of a given country, it also depends on the internal elements of the organization, as well as being partly independent of these fields, due to the autonomy of human activities in the organization. Religion influences the shape of organizational culture in each of the three approaches presented. For the purposes of this article, to show this impact, organizational culture will be analyzed on the assumption that it is an independent variable conditioned by existing religion.

6. Religion, social environment, and organizational culture

Recognizing culture as an independent variable is important for studying the relationship between ambient culture and elements of the management process. In this approach, culture is an explanatory factor or a broad frame of reference that affects specific elements of the management process. The culture of the external environment of organization influences employee and managerial behavior in a given country and directly determines it. From this perspective, you can compare management and employee attitudes in different countries. The culture values of a given country influence what is happening in organizations. In comparative studies on management methods, the culture of the country is considered the basic tool of analysis. It answers the question about the reasons for behavior in the workplace.

The culture of the social environment, being the external environment of the organization, affects the culture of the organization. It is therefore reasonable and necessary to subject it to a more detailed analysis. National culture is the most frequently indicated factor determining the value of organizational culture. Hofstede indicates that the dimensions of national culture are positively correlated with some characteristic of organizational culture [12]. They also prove that combining organizational culture with national culture results in high job satisfaction, improves decision-making processes, and is positively correlated with the effectiveness of activities in the organization [4]. National culture, being part of the cultural environment of the organization, affects organizational culture through all of the factors mentioned.

Therefore, since the category of enterprise culture is a product of the socio-cultural and economic context in which the enterprise operates [4], norms, attitudes, and values are transferred to the enterprise to a large extent from its external environment. It is assumed that there is a diffusion of values and norms from the culture of society to organizational culture [15].

Social culture cannot be narrowed down to the sphere of values, as it also includes the sphere of moral practices recognized in society. Therefore, the impact of social culture on organizational culture occurs not only through values but also the practices that result from them.

Although one of the important factors influencing the organizational culture is the national culture of the country in which the organization operates, the dimensions of the national culture do not translate directly – mechanically into the organizational culture of companies [16].

It can be assumed that since specific values occur at the level of a given society, they should also be visible at the organizational and individual levels.

From three levels of cultural programming, religion shapes organizational cultures by programming on two levels: almost entirely learned cultural level and partly, to some extent genetically determined, individual. Programming at the cultural level reflects the basic cultural assumptions, while programming at the individual level—the values of organizational culture. Culture is a collection of religious values that are, at least partly, individual for people living in the same social environment [17].

7. Organizational culture: structure, terms, and components

Schein [18, 19] created a structural model of culture, which is used as a framework in analyzing organizational culture in this study. The reason to use this particular model is two-fold: it has received less criticism than other models [20] and it has been operationalized before [21, 22]. Therefore, this research assumes a particular understanding of *organizational culture*. It is a pattern of shared basic assumptions, which have been created, discovered, or developed by a given group while it learned to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. This pattern of basic assumptions has proved its usefulness in the past, and therefore is validated to be transferred to the new group members. It will serve as the correct way to perceive, comprehend, and act on those problem areas [18].

Schein [18, 19] maintains that examining culture should be based on examining the deeply held basic assumptions in a group as those historical structures tend to be kept by the members in an almost unconscious realm. They fulfill their objectives directing, guiding, and giving meaning to one's relations with nature, reality, and others. Those values and shared basic assumptions are believed to materialize themselves in the form of artifacts. Given a number of layered levels of culture, Schein [18, 19] proposes that a structure of organizational culture is best represented by a multi-level figure as presented below, in **Figure 1**.

Organizational culture encompasses a cognitive component, which consists of mutual assumptions, beliefs, norms, and attitudes that the organization's members share, and which also shape their mental (interpretative) schemes [23–25]. Therefore, organizational culture shapes and determines the way members perceive, construe, and behave in their immediate surroundings. The cognitive component of organizational culture is responsible for the way that unique meaning and reaction are ascribed to phenomena within and outside the organization.

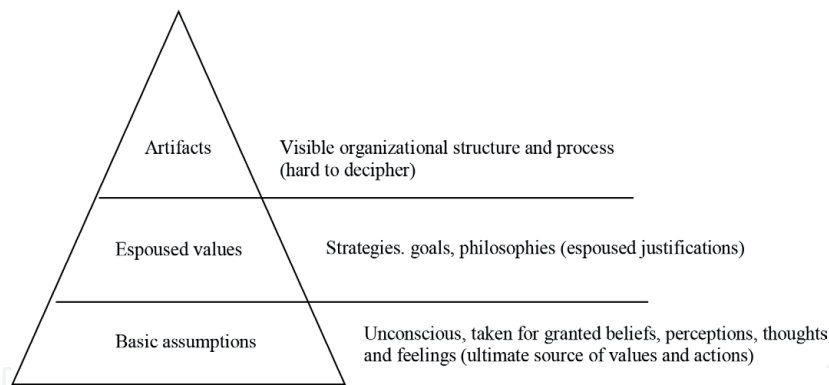


Figure 1.
 Structural model of organizational culture indicating different levels of culture. Source: [19], p. 17.

While imposing a set of assumptions and values, organizational culture defines its members' perceptions, interpretations, and actions [26].

Inevitably, organizational culture impacts therefore all the processes taking place in an organization, as well as, eventually, its performance. Through organization's members' mental maps, culture can influence organization's: leadership style, learning, knowledge management, business strategy, the preferred style of changing management, employee reward system, or employee commitment.

This study is carried out at the level of the organization and is premised upon the fact that there appear similar patterns of culture across organizations operating in a particular region. This region can be understood as either defined by geography or general societal culture. However, it must be underlined that organizational culture is also dependent on factors external to the organization. Furthermore, some differences between organizational cultures in organizations can be explained by similar variations in culture-producing forces external to those organizations on the societal level [20]. Consequently, organizations should not be conceptualized as "cultural islands" or a "mini-societies." Instead, it seems to be useful to define organizational culture as a nexus where broader, societal dimensions of culture converge [27].

8. The operationalization of basic assumptions of organizational culture

This study is conditioned on the basis that value dimensions can serve to differentiate one culture from another. Therefore, value dimensions are applied to help illustrate the expected differences occurring between the researched organizations.

The most commonly adopted framework for culture research is the one developed by Hofstede. It was created for the first large-scale study of culture. Moreover, it has been praised by reviewers for its rigorous research design, a systematic data collection, and a coherent theory to explain national variations [28].

Through empirical research, Hofstede has identified four main dimensions which distinguish between cultures. In the business context, those four values have been repeatedly found relevant as well, especially when analyzing and clarifying differences observed in leadership styles [29] or managerial skills [30]. The four dimensions are considered to be suitable and fitting when examining differences in basic underlying assumptions of organizational cultures [4, 16].

Hofstede's dimensions represent *what* issues all societies had in common. Those matters include the power in relationships, the ambiguity of life, the influences of

groups, and the nurturing perspectives. Each of the dimensions is presented with its basic assumptions [31, 32] as in the tables below (**Tables 1–4**).

- *Individualism* refers to the identity of self as based either solely on the individual or on the individual as part of a group or collective.
- *Power distance* refers to the social stratification within a society in which higher status individuals/groups are ascribed more power and authority by those of lower status.
- *Uncertainty avoidance* refers to the society’s fear of the unknown or ambiguous situations.
- *Masculinity* (assertiveness) refers to a society’s preference for competition and outcomes (masculine values) as opposed to co-operation and process (feminine values).

A model of basic underlying assumptions of organizational culture, which is determined by societal/national culture and through it by religion, has been created. The model is presented in **Figure 2** below.

This comprehensive model, embracing basic underlying assumptions of culture, can be used to describe organizational culture.

Individualism	Collectivism
People are independent	People are interdependent
One’s identity draws from individual personality	One’s identity draws from belonging to a group
People are not emotionally dependent on organizations or groups	People need to be emotionally dependent on organizations or groups
Individual achievement is ideal	Group achievement is ideal
The individual protects him/herself and his/her relatives	The group protects its members in exchange for their loyalty
Making decisions individually is best	Making decisions as a group is best

Source: [33], p. 119.

Table 1.
General assumptions in individualism vs. collectivism.

Small power distance	High power distance
Inequality is fundamentally bad	Inequality is fundamentally good
Everyone plays a different role	Everyone has a place; some are high, and some are low in social structure
People are interdependent	Most people should be dependent on the leader
All people should have the same rights	The powerful are entitled to privileges
The powerful should hide their power	The powerful should demonstrate their power

Source: [33], p. 120.

Table 2.
General assumptions in power distance.

Small uncertainty avoidance	High uncertainty avoidance
Conflict should not be avoided	Conflict should be avoided at any cost
Deviant people and ideas should be tolerated	Deviant people and ideas should not be tolerated
Laws are not very important and should not be followed	Laws are very important and should be followed
Experts and authorities are not usually correct	Experts and authorities are usually correct
Consensus is not important	Consensus is important

Source: [33], p. 120.

Table 3.
General assumptions in uncertainty avoidance.

Masculinity	Femininity
Gender roles should be clearly defined and distinguished	Gender roles should not be clearly defined and distinguished
Men are assertive and dominant	Women are taking care of others
Machismo-exaggerated manliness in men is good	Machismo-exaggerated manliness in men is bad
Men should be decisive	Women should be supportive
Work takes priority over other duties	Private life is important
Advancement, success, and money are important	Good atmosphere at work is important

Source: [33], p. 121.

Table 4.
General assumptions in masculinity vs. femininity.

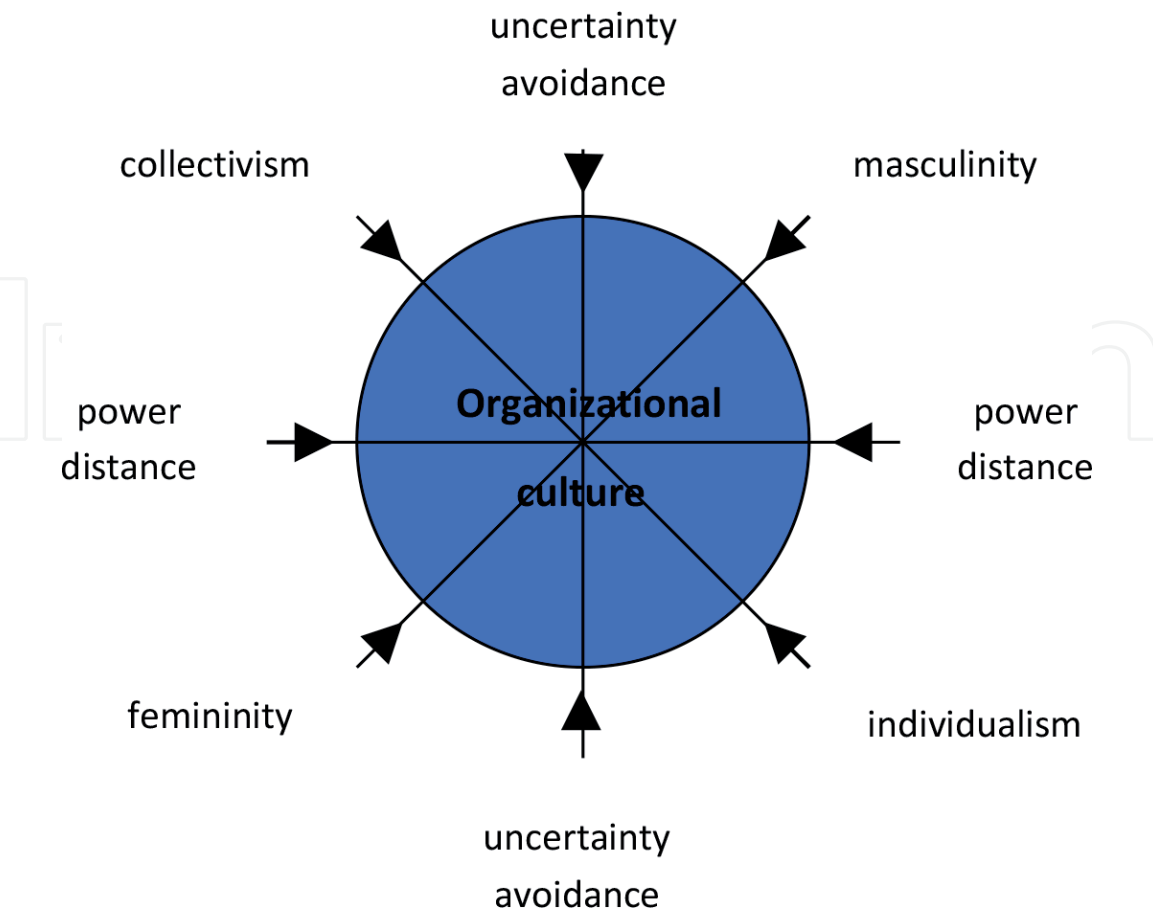


Figure 2.
Model of basic assumptions of organizational culture based on national culture. Source: [4], p. 70

9. Study of basic assumptions in an organizational culture

Within this research, culture (especially its religion component) is treated as an independent variable [34–36]. This research focuses its scope on two organizations in the Podlaskie Voivodship (North-Eastern part of Poland).

Companies in this region operate in religious plurality, which stems from the region's location and history. This diversity allowed for the creation of distinct value systems and attitudes. Nowadays, two largest ethnic groups in the region are the members of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

As in 2010, the Voivodship has a population of 11,883 inhabitants [4]. Catholic and Orthodox congregations overall constitute 77 and 13.5% of all inhabitants of Podlaskie Voivodeship, respectively. However, in some areas, the proportions are significantly different. For instance, over 80% of the inhabitants of the Hajnowski district are Orthodox Church believers [37].

9.1 Research sample

The choice of this research sample was purposeful. The comparative study in this research includes two companies. Out of the two researched companies, one is located in a Catholic-surrounding, in a region where 99.7% of the local population declares Catholicism, while the remaining 0.3% declares a different religion or atheism. Contrastingly, the other company is located in an Orthodox environment, where the local population consists of 60.6% Orthodox, 25.3% Catholic and 14.1% other religion inhabitants. The companies employ 300 and 51 workers, respectively.

The number of research participants amounted to 99, out of which 64 participants declared Catholicism, while 35—Orthodox religion. All of the research participants came from religiously homogenous families. The family members of the participant would all declare the same religion as the research participant.

9.2 Research methodology

This research has adopted the case study method, whose design allows to examine the relationship between organizational culture and religion. A questionnaire was used for data collection. It was made of numerous statements embodying the four cultural dimensions. Each of the dimensions was represented by two polarized statements, with a grade scale in between them. The respondent had to use the scale to indicate how accurately a statement illustrated his/her views.

On the left side of the questionnaire, statements expressing individualism, low power distance, low uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity were placed. Contrastingly, the right side of the questionnaire included statements representing expressing collectivism, high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, and femininity. Research data collection was followed by a statistical analysis, whose aim was to establish whether statistically significant differences occur between the answers collected from the Catholic and Orthodox respondent groups, all the while considering the hypothesis formulated during the course of the research. The U Mann-Whitney test, which is very useful especially in the case of researching small groups, was applied to compare the medians in the two independent research groups.

This research was based on a zero hypothesis—“h0”: both research samples derive from a population with the same median. The alternative hypothesis read as follows “h1”: research samples derive from varied populations with different medians. The “h0” assumes that no significant differences with regards to the four dimensions of culture occur between the respondents from the Catholic and Orthodox environments. Contrastingly, the alternative hypothesis assumes the opposite, which is

that significant differences with regards to the four dimensions of culture do occur between the respondents from the Catholic and Orthodox environments. The results of the research hypothesis analysis suggested rejecting “h0” in favor of “h1.”

9.3 Research findings

With regards to the research results, figures depicting influences of basic assumptions of organizational culture have been presented below in **Figure 3**. The results of the research study confirm that a relatively high level of individualism, relatively low power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity characterize organizational cultures where the environment is dominated by the Catholic religion. Contrastingly, the organizational culture derived from the Orthodox environment is characterized by a relatively high level of collectivism, femininity, power distance, and the relatively low level of tolerance of uncertainty.

9.4 Verification of the research findings

Following the presented model of organizational culture was the process of verifying the research results. In order to do that, another study of both previously described companies was carried out and was completed by the same group of respondents. The second study aimed to identify differences in cultural assumptions in organizational cultures of both investigated organizations. This study was carried out with the use of a survey, which, as the previous one, included opposing statements and a ranking scale in between each pair. There were eight opposing statements in total: each two regarded one of the four dimensions. This time, the respondent was asked to indicate the extent to which the dimension is present in his/her company. The scale placed in between the opposing statements had 9 points. The grades 1–4, placed near to the statement on the left of the page, would indicate how much this statement depicts the company culture (where “1” would be the highest rank, the fullest compliance and 2–4, respectively, lower). Similarly, the grades 6–9, placed near the statement on the right side of the page, indicated how much that

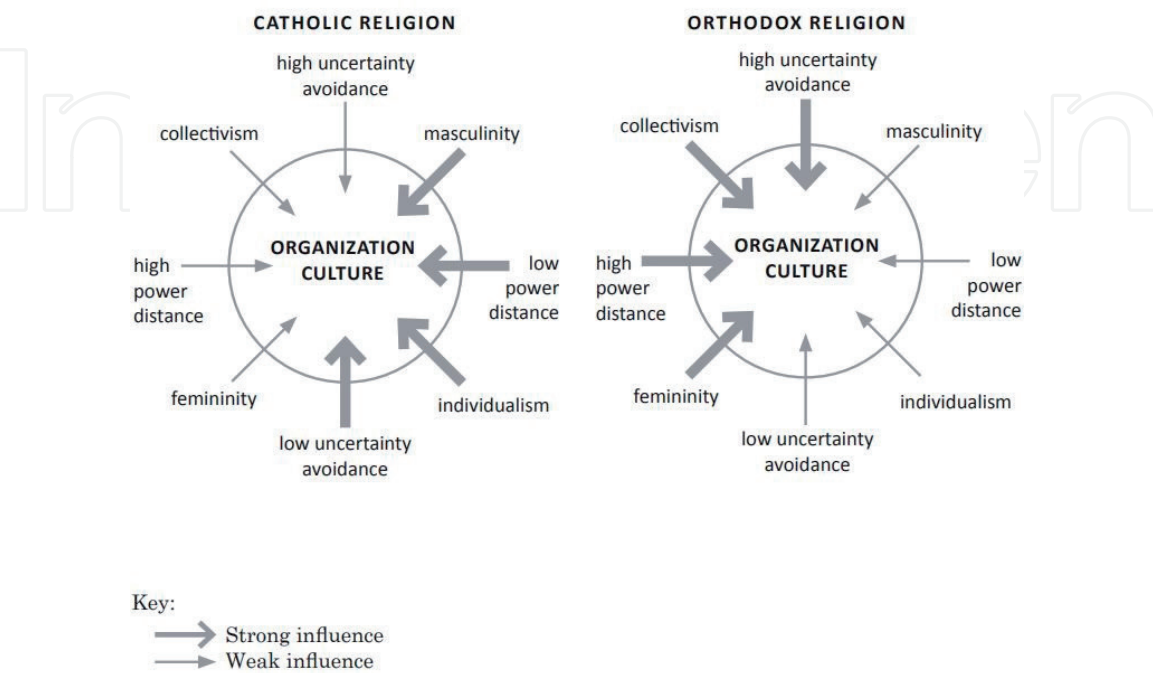


Figure 3.
Models of basic assumptions of organizational culture influenced by religions. Source: [4], p. 125.

statement depicts the company culture (where “9” would be the highest rank, the fullest compliance and 8, 7, 6, respectively, lower). The middle and neutral grade, “5,” was to be used if the statements were equally true in relation to the respondent’s company. The opposing statements used in the survey follow in **Tables 5–8** below. *Individualism/collectivism* was illustrated by the following statements:

Individualism	Collectivism
Employees are looking for challenges at work and they decide how to tackle them	Employees are not looking for challenges at work and do not want the freedom to decide how to tackle them
Employees prefer being a leader and not a regular member of the group	A regular member of the group status is satisfactory enough

Table 5.
General assumptions in individualism vs. collectivism in organizational culture. Source: [4], p. 64.

Power distance was illustrated by the following statements:

Small power distance	High power distance
Subordinates do not expect detailed instructions from superiors	Subordinates expect detailed instructions from superiors and generally accept them without reservations
If they have reservations, subordinates rather confidently cast doubt about what their superiors asked them to do	Subordinates rather do not question what their superiors asked them to do even if they have certain doubts

Source: [4], p. 65.

Table 6.
General assumptions in power distance in organizational culture.

Uncertainty avoidance was illustrated by the following statements:

Small uncertainty avoidance	High uncertainty avoidance
Employees are generally willing to take up non-standard actions and superiors gladly accept when it happens	Employees are reluctant to take non-standard measures and superiors do not expect them to
Employees are often nervous or tense at work	Employees are rarely nervous or tense at work

Source: [4], p. 66.

Table 7.
General assumptions in uncertainty avoidance in organizational culture.

Masculinity/femininity was illustrated by the following statements:

Masculinity	Femininity
Employees expect rapid promotion, non-routine work, high earnings, and recognition from the managers	Nice atmosphere at work, good relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and stable employment is what employees expect of the workplace
The chance of high earnings is ideal	Stable employment is ideal

Source: [4], p. 67.

Table 8.
General assumptions in masculinity or femininity in organizational culture.

The results of the research confirm the reliability of the proposed models of organizational culture in the environment of the Catholic and Orthodox religions. Additionally, the results confirmed that statistically significant differences with regards to the dimensions expressed by statements from tables above do occur.

The results thereby demonstrate the usefulness and practical aspect of the presented models of organizational culture.

As per the research results, it can be assumed that the organizational culture in companies dominated by the Catholic religion is rather task-orientated while in companies dominated by the Orthodox religion—it is rather relationship orientated. This should serve as an indicator for managers when dealing with subordinates. However, it must be added that despite the differences, there are also numerous similarities bonding the two confessions. Hence, both differences and similarities between the two groups will have an impact on the company culture.

10. Conclusions

Preferences for values and cultural dimensions often stem from religion. It is the sources of guidelines for employees to recall and rely on when making difficult decisions at work. Religion, therefore, proves to be an impactful factor co-creating culture. This is also true in the case of business and organizational culture.

Due to its exceptional influence, organizational culture is one of the most intensely researched concepts within its field. It can influence the behavior of the organization members as well as the performance of the organization as a whole.

No organization and no organizational culture are created in a vacuum or arise from nothingness. The forces external to the organization and its entire environment help shape the culture within. It is the organization's founder, especially in its first stages, who originally builds the organization and its culture. However, as the organization develops, the influence of the environment systematically increases. The exchange with the external environment intensifies, the inflow of new employees increases, and new needs like adapting to changes on the market, making acquisitions or mergers arise. The external impact, although changing with time, will always remain as one of the culture-producing factors for the organization. Therefore, if the external values of the environment and internal values of employees do not support the organizational culture, there is a risk for the company of not achieving corporate objectives.

The impact of religion on the process of creating organizational culture cannot be overestimated. Based on this research results, conclusions for managers can be drawn. In general, Catholic culture requires more individual motivation and rewards systems, while the Orthodox culture—group motivation and rewards systems. The members of the Catholic organizational culture will prefer a rather flat organizational structure with participating management style while the Orthodox members—rather hierarchical structure with a more directive management style. Similarly, the Catholic culture members will prefer freedom in the way they accomplish tasks, more learning opportunities as well as more challenges at work in general while Orthodox culture members would prefer to fulfill their task in a normalized, routinized way, not to have numerous learning opportunities or challenges at work. Additionally, Catholic-influenced organizational culture will be characterized by task orientation and rather rational, based on expertise leadership. Contrastingly, Orthodox-influenced organizational culture will be characterized by relationship orientation and rather mystical, based on formal authority leadership.

Companies operating in a religiously diversified environment face, therefore, a unique opportunity of building organizational culture supportive of those differences. In order to succeed in building and maintaining an organizational culture for varied stakeholders, specific competences are required. Those could be not only knowledge of the customs of a given religion or confession, but, more importantly, subtle skills of social and emotional intelligence like leading by example, openness, acceptance, respect, and inclusivity.

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